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ABSTRACT

This report outlines the Mississippi Quality Education Project (QEP), a program that provides intensive training to parents, teachers, and school administrators for the purpose of improving the nature and quality of home-to-school communications, and with the ultimate objective of improving students' academic achievement. The report includes a list of project goals, a description of the project, a list of services provided to the school district, a list of key components, sample two-way pledges (a principal-teacher pledge and a parent-school pledge), data on parent involvement in the QEP project, and various forms and related materials. A summary and lengthy abstract are appended. (MM)

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A MODEL PARENT INVOLVEMENT INITIATIVE

Presented by:

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PS 020658

The National Black Child Development Institute
21st Annual Conference
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QUALITY EDUCATION PROJECT

Mississippi - QEP

A Model Program for Parent Involvement in Education

Project Implementation Period: 10/1/89 - 9/30/92

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Mississippi - QEP Program provides intensive training to parents, teachers, and school administrators to improve the nature and quality of home-school communications, with the ultimate objective of improving student academic achievement. A weekly folder communication system, a teacher/parent/student pledge, refocused Back to School Night and Open House events, and clear, consistent communications from principals and teachers to parents form the basis of the program. QEP Field Directors provide hands-on assistance and resources, working on-site with teachers, liaisons, and principals to assure that program objectives established by teams of parents, teachers and principals progress on schedule. Field Directors also train school personnel to conduct and encourage attendance at parent education classes on such topics as Helping with Homework, Establishing a Positive Discipline Plan, Monitoring Your Child's Progress, and Securing Answers to Questions about Your Children's School.

More than 77.8% of the 16,087 students served by Mississippi-QEP in 7 school districts are impoverished, African American children. The rate of school failure for these children is among the highest in the nation, with a history of 36.3% dropping out of school.

Since program implementation began, parent support for education increased from 12.9% to 50.5% during the first year, rising to 63.6% during the second year. Matched experimental and control groups are being compared with respect to Stanford Achievement Test scores, dropout rates, parent support for education, attitudes toward school, and other attributes. Project participants are expected to demonstrate statistically significant gains over the control group by September, 1992.

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GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOALS:

The goal of the Quality Education Project is to generate focused, effective parent involvement in order to increase student success.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To positively engage parents in supporting the schools and their children's education.
2. To implement effective home-school communication systems which allow parents to be kept well informed about the school and their children's progress.
3. To train school administrators on successful strategies for involving parents both at home and at school and in developing community support for the schools.
4. To train teachers on successful strategies for communicating with parents and teaching parents to reinforce skills being learned at school.
5. To train parents on how to support their own children's education at home and at school.
6. To promote reading as the key curricular activity for parental focus.
7. To involve the business, medical, and religious communities in supporting the schools through direct assistance, and to develop positive public relations for the schools in the community.

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HOW QEP WORKS

The first step for QEP work is a district assessment. This involves an evaluation of school personnel, levels of parent and community support, and the student population. Research on school district demographics, attitudes, test scores and the need for parent involvement projects are investigated. Meetings are held and contacts are made with key persons in each district, including superintendents,principals, teachers, parents, classified personnel, and school board members.

A recommendation regarding QEP program implementation is prepared. The findings are shared with the superintendent and a plan is developed which incorporates QEP Key Components and QEP Goals and Objectives, and which responds specifically to the school district's needs.

> ***The QEP materials are part of a classroom management and staff development program. As with any other training, we wouldn't expect to change the attitudes and behaviors of a school staff toward parent involvement by merely selling a book.***
>
> ***Therefore, when we distribute QEP, the customer purchases not only our materials but also our training program. The two, fortunately, cannot be separated. QEP is a highly structured, site-based program. It works because it is part of a total system and because of the methods of introducing and implementing the components and materials.***

One of the hallmarks of QEP services, in addition to the program materials, is the support provided directly to schools by QEP project coordinators. Visits to school sites, meetings with principals, teachers and parents offer the guidance and encouragement vital to the successful implementation of the program.

Part of a school district's commitment to QEP is the assignment of a district-paid person whom we will train to provide support for the project. This gives greater assurance of the continuance of the QEP program after the QEP coordinator is no longer working with the school district.

The Quality Education Project uses many ideas familiar to educators, but adds the powerful business concepts of marketing and accountability and applies them to schools. There are twelve core strategies of the QEP program. Critical among these are the Quality Education Project Parent Pledge, Home/School Communication, and the Weekly Folder. These activities are implemented in every school district according to a timeline which best fits that district's needs.

There are several steps to QEP implementation in a school or district:

1. Establishing rapport with participating principals and teachers.
2. Developing a parent involvement plan tailored to each school's needs.
3. Providing effective, hands-on material.
4. Assisting with the support and strategies necessary for successful program implementation.
5. Providing support and assistance in other areas as needed to enhance school-wide effectiveness.

Even though few of the components of the Quality Education Project program are new to educators, there are critical differences. QEP's programs are <u>focused</u>... strategies are clear and systematic. QEP's efforts are <u>meaningful</u> to parents... they receive regular information on their child's progress. QEP's ideas are <u>practical</u>. The Resource Manuals provide hands on materials which are immediately usable and applicable to most school settings.

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KEY COMPONENTS

Parent Pledge

QEP assists the school in developing a Parent Pledge to be signed by parents identifying several basic ways they can support their children's education.

Weekly Folders

QEP provides each school with folders and trains teachers to use a system in which children bring their corrected work home on the same day every week for monitoring by parents; folders and parent comments are returned to school with parents' signatures on the following day. The system is monitored by QEP.

Back to School Events

QEP works with school administrators to develop and organize effective Back to School Events with maximum attendance to inaugurate the home-school partnership early in the year and provide parents with vital information about the school and their children's classes.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

QEP provides information and checklists for administrators, teachers and parents to maximize participation and communication during conferences, so that all can work together more effectively to promote student success.

Parent Education Program

QEP offers training for parents in basic parenting skills and methods for supporting learning in the home, and provides parents with knowledge of school system operations. In addition, QEP encourages the development of Parent Involvement Cadres, which are groups of parents and teachers working together at each school site in support of the home-school partnership.

Principal Training Program

The QEP Project Director meets with administrators individually and in small seminars to develop and share effective parent involvement strategies, and to trouble-shoot areas of concern which may interfere with the success of the program.

Teacher Inservice

QEP conducts teacher training sessions which offer personalized support in developing methods to communicate more effectively with parents.

Principals' Newsletters

QEP works with principals to develop effective school newsletters which are sent home at least once a month to provide clear information about school programs and policies.

Teachers' Communications

QEP trains teachers to use newsletters to explain the classroom curriculum to parents and suggest home activities which reinforce what children are learning.

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Reading Focus	QEP emphasizes the importance of reading through a home reading program which encourages parents to read with their children every day and coordination of a community-based Turn On to Reading Week.
Community Events	QEP brings diverse segments of the community together in support of education through events such as Education Sunday, Turn On to Reading Week, and Education Rallies.
Home Survey	QEP assists the district in developing and administering a Home Survey to assess parents' perceptions of the school's programs and policies, and their knowledge of learning strategies for use in the home.

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SERVICES TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

1. Conduct an assessment of the district's needs.

2. Develop a QEP Plan for improving parent involvement and making schools more effective based on the assessment.

3. Provide personal consulting assistance and training for principals, teachers, parents and district office staffs as necessary to implement the QEP Plan.

4. Work closely with the superintendent and district office staff to ensure successful monitoring and implementation of the QEP Plan.

5. Work with business, medical, and religious communities to build rapport and develop support for the schools.

6. Make available the Resource Manuals, Parent Training Modules, and other QEP materials for program implementation.

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MISSISSIPPI
QUALITY EDUCATION PROJECT
TWO-WAY PLEDGE

PRINCIPAL/TEACHER PLEDGE

We understand the importance of the school experience to every student and our role as educators and role models. Therefore, we agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of our ability:

- Provide a safe place for your child to learn.
- Teach all the necessary concepts to your child for academic achievement (learning).
- Strive to be aware of your child's individual needs.
- Communicate with you regularly regarding your child's progress.

Child's Name _____ School _____ Grade _____
School's Address _____ School's Telephone _____
Principal's Name _____ Teacher's Signature _____

PARENT/SCHOOL PLEDGE

Parents and family are a child's first and most important teachers. To encourage my child's learning and success in school, I will do the following:

- Provide a quiet place for my child to study every night.
- Encourage my child to complete his/her homework every day.
- Make sure my child gets plenty of rest.
- Send my child to school on time every day.
- Attend Back To School Night, Parent-Teacher Conferences, Open House and other school events.
- Spend at least **15** minutes per day reading with/to my child.

Child's Name _____ School _____ Grade _____
Parent's Signature _____
Address _____ Telephone _____

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State of the Classroom Memo

Room _____ Teacher _____ Grade _____

Education Corner

This month we are working on the following:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please help your child with this month's school work.

We are proud to announce that . . .

_____

_____

_____

Calendar of Classroom and School Events

Event	Date	Time	Place

over

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Special Message

Art work of the student

Teacher's Comments

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QUALITY EDUCATION PROJECT

MISSISSIPPI - QEP

Established in Fall, 1989, MS-QEP provides services to 16,087 students in grades K-6 in 27 schools in 7 Mississippi school districts. The program involves 889 teachers and approximately 24,131 parents.

In Fall, 1990, an Even Start project was added to the program, providing adult and early childhood education services to families with children ages 1 to 7. An additional Even Start program commenced operation in Fall, 1991.

MS-QEP provides the following educational products:

Elementary Education:

- QEP Implementation Manual
- QEP Teacher Training Manual
- QEP Parent Education Manual
- QEP Home-Based Instruction Manual
- QEP Partners in Education Manual
- QEP Implementation Manual

- Early Childhood Education Modules
- Early Childhood Education Home Activities
- Human Resources Network and Referral System
- Family Assessment System
- A Guide to Implementing an Even Start Program

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QUALITY EDUCATION PROJECT

ENGAGED PARENT INVOLVEMENT IMPROVES STUDENT ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Research compiled in the 49 studies published in *The Evidence Continues to Grow: Parent Involvement Improves Student Achievement - An Annotated Bibliography by Anne Henderson* (National Committee for Citizens in Education; 1987, 1989) indicates that parent involvement:

- improves students' academic gains and test scores
- improves students' behavior and attitudes toward school
- improves students' long-term academic achievement
- fosters more successful education programs and better schools

MISSISSIPPI - QEP'S GOAL IS

ENGAGED PARENT INVOLVEMENT

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INCREASED PARENT INVOLVEMENT RESULTS

Preliminary Evaluation Results

Preliminary results of **parent involvement** are listed below by pre-program baseline data as it compares to the condition in June of 1990 and June of 1991. There has been a statistically significant increase in parent involvement during the first two years of the project. The average gain computes to the 50.5% level for 1990 and the 63.6% level for 1991.

BASELINE DATA - MS-QEP PARENT INVOLVEMENT

MS-QEP Districts	% attend school events	% attend conf.	% promote academic achieve.	% monitor home-work	% Average Total
Total Avg.	1.3	39.4	5.4	5.3	12.9

POSITIVE FIRST YEAR DATA - JUNE, 1990

Total Avg.	28.6	62.4	77.0	85.7	63.4

POSITIVE SECOND YEAR DATA - JUNE, 1991

Total Avg.	43.8	75.3	89.3	97.7	76.5

TOTAL ANCILLARY GAINS

School / Home Communications

School-to-Home communications have dramatically increased as shown below:

	PRINCIPALS			TEACHERS		
	# Principals	# Principals who sent newsletters	%	# Teachers	# Teachers who sent newsletters	%
1988-89	27	3	11.1	889	9	1.0
1989-90	27	20	74.1	889	589	66.3
1990-91	27	23	85.2	889	702	79.0
		GAIN:	74.0		GAIN:	78.0

TOTAL ANCILLARY GAINS
continued

Staff Training

The number of staff trained and the number of staff training sessions are listed below by position, district, and evaluation results.

MS-QEP	Teachers	Sessions	Principals	Sessions	Rating
Total	3,695	87	102	93	4.9

The staff training data above indicates significant results as listed below:

- 3,695 teachers trained; (duplicated count)
- 102 principals trained; (duplicated count)
- 180 sessions provided; (teachers and principals)
- 99% of the participants reported that they would use the information gained from the session;
- 4.9 was the average rating of the quality of the inservice training sessions on a scale of 1 - 5, 1 being poor, 5 being excellent.

Parent Education

The number of parents trained and the number of training sessions are listed below by district and evaluation of the success of the sessions as of June, 1991.

MS-QEP Districts	# Parents	# Sessions	% of who reported "...use info gained..."	Quality 1-5 scale
Total	6,458	308	99.1	4.5

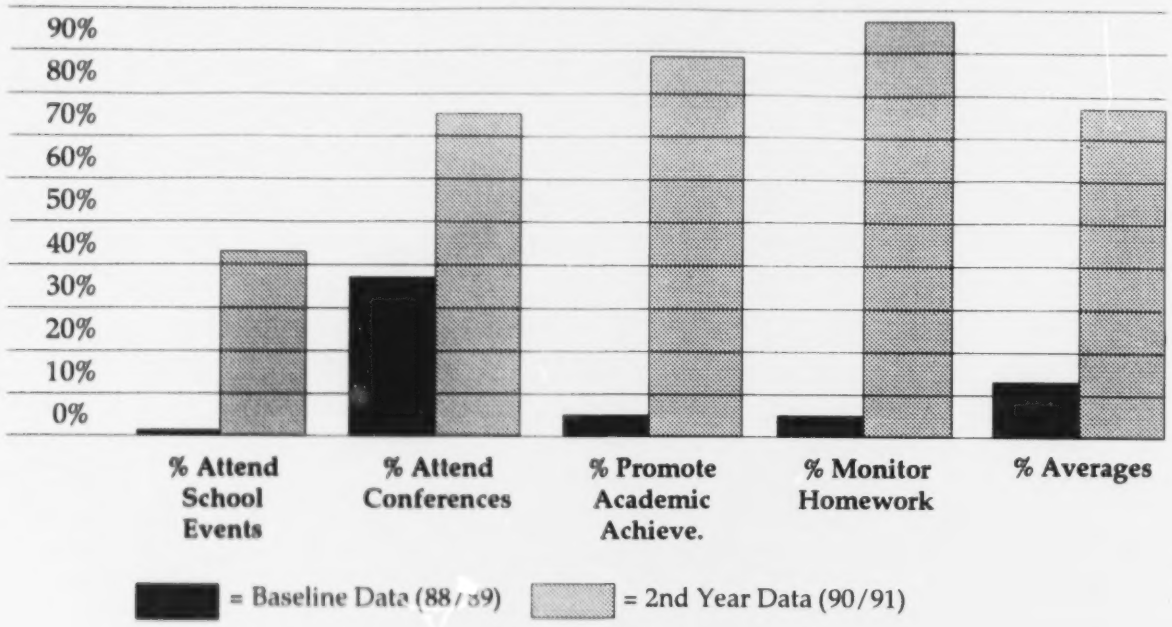
The data as of June, 1991, concerning parent education listed above reveals that:

- 6,458 parents have received training (duplicated count);
- 308 parent training sessions have been conducted.
- 99.1% indicated they would use the information gained;
- 4.5 (excellent) average rating.

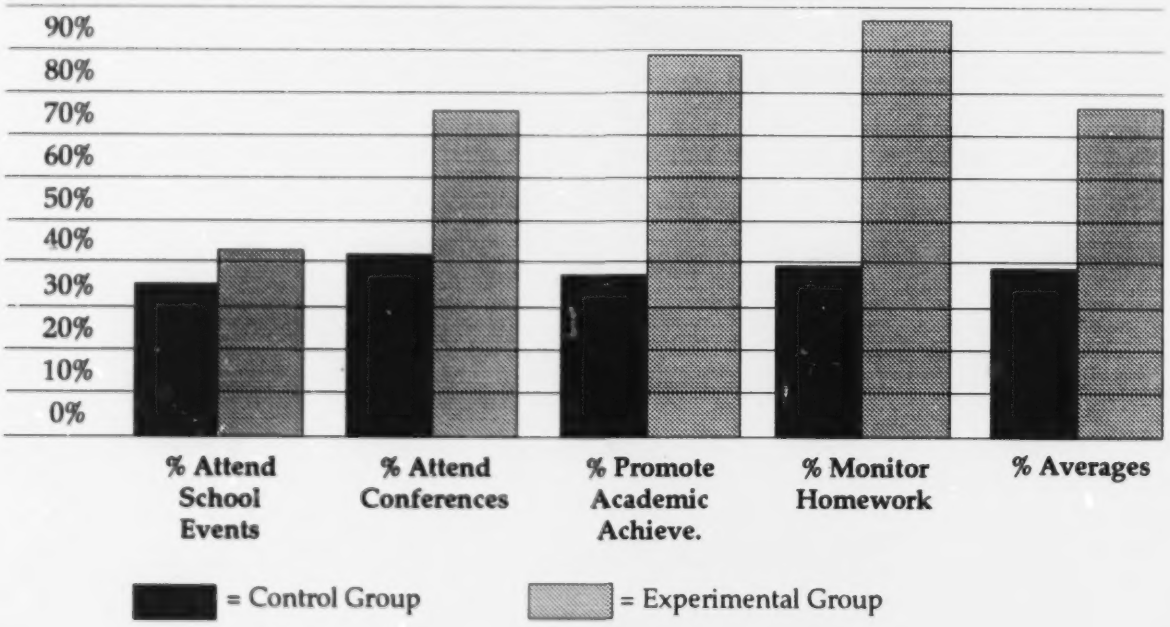
Education Sunday and Special Events

- As of June 1991, 61 Education Sundays were held with 5,908 attending.
- Two training workshops were held in March, 1991: (representing all districts)
  - "Make-It, Take-It Workshop", 166 attending, 5.0 rating
  - "Parent Involvement- Research Implications and Practices", 166 attending, 4.4 rating

PARENT INVOLVEMENT - Baseline (88/89) vs 1990/91
Experimental Group Only



PARENT INVOLVEMENT - 1990/91
Control Group vs Experimental Group



Title Page

Presenter: Ivy H. Lovelady, Ed.D., Director of Program
Mississippi Quality Education Project (QEP)
Home #: 601-362-5954
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Suggested Title: "A Model Parent Involvement Initiative"

"Summary of Presentation"

Specific steps to increasing parents' involvement in their child's education will be presented. Focus will be given to the role of the local school or district in initiating an evolving and sustaining relationship between school and families. Data will depict successful outcomes in relation to increased parental participation. The role of the community at large--businesses, social service agencies, universities and the church communities will also be delineated.

Category of Presentation: "Education"

PS 020658

Abstract of Presentation

The Quality Education Project (QEP) is a parental involvement program initiated in the state of Mississippi in 1989. The project's goal is to provide a system for involving parents, teachers, school administrators, and the general community in partnerships which will have a positive impact on student success. QEP has had significant impact on the lives of students and their families, especially those who are poor and minority.

QEP recognizes that the crucial link between home, school and community has diminished. Staff at the school site feel isolated. Parents feel alienated. Many parents are caught up in the hectic pace of today's society and are not taking on an "empowered" stance for the responsibility of educating their own children. The realities of single parent families, economic pressures, poverty, and other societal considerations interfere with a parent's involvement in his or her child's education.

QEP bases its work on the assumption that all parents love their children and want the best possible education for them. But a major obstacle in achieving successful parent involvement is a lack of effective home-school communication. Schools often fail to keep parents apprised of the classroom curriculum and how they can reinforce concepts being learned at school through activities in the home. Schools sometime asked parents to do things which they do not know how to do. When parents fail to respond, educators

mistakenly believe that the parents are not interested or supportive.

QEP has discovered that:

1) parents <u>will</u> participate with the school when shown how to do so successfully;

2) parents <u>will</u> support the school, no matter what their cultural, socio-economic, language or educational background is, when they feel accepted, cared about and respected;

3) a parent involvement program is only as successful as the school leadership and staff believe it can be.

Although QEP's program does not specifically stress advocacy, governance, and volunteering in the schools, QEP does support parent involvement in these areas. QEP's focus is on the area which research shows has the strongest impact on student achievement--parents actively engaged at home in support of their child's education. This includes:

1) effective home/school communication which leads to the family supporting the school;

2) parenting skills to help parents interact more positively with their children at home;

3) home activities where parents can reinforce skills learned at school.

QEP's overarching objectives are:

1. To positively engage parents in supporting the schools and their children's education.

2. To implement effective home-school communication systems which allow parents to be kept well informed about the school and their children's progress.

3. To train school administrators on successful strategies for involving parents both at home and at school in developing community support for the schools.

4. To train teachers on successful strategies for communicating with parents and teaching parents to reinforce skills being learned at school.

5. To train parents on how to support their individual child's education at home and at school.

6. To promote reading as the key curricular activity for parental focus.

7. To involve the business, medical, and religious communities in supporting the schools through direct assistance, and to develop positive public relations for the schools in the community.

"HOW QEP WORKS"

One of the hallmarks of QEP services, in addition to the program materials, is the support provided directly to schools by QEP project coordinators. Visits to school sites, meetings with principals, teachers and parents offer the guidance and encouragement vital to the successful implementation of the program.

The Quality Education Project uses many ideas familiar to educators, but adds the powerful business concepts of marketing and accountability and applies them to schools. There are twelve core strategies of the QEP program. Critical among these are the Quality Education Project Parent Pledge, Home/School Communication, and the Weekly Folder. These activities are implemented in every school district according to a timeline which best fits that district's needs.

There are several steps to QEP implementation in a school or district:

1) Developing a parent involvement plan tailored to each school's needs.

2) Providing effective, hand-on material.

3) Assisting with the support and strategies necessary for successful program implementation.

4) Providing support and assistance in other areas as needed to enhance school-wide effectiveness.

Even though few of the components of the Quality Education Project program are new to educators, there are critical difference. QEP's programs are focused...strategies are clear and systematic. QEP's efforts are meaningful to parents...they receive regular information on their child's progress. QEP's ideas are practical.

We have had enormous success in Mississippi, particularly as it relates to getting economically disadvantaged parents to take the initiative to get involve in their child's education at the school level. In the proposed presentation, information will be presented detailing the stages of QEP implementation, the increased participation of parents in their child's school-related activities, and some encouraging data which suggests that the QEP strategies work for poor and minority parents. Parents do become more involved in their child's education. Additionally, data will be presented identifying the collaborative initiatives of local school districts, social service agencies, businesses, the religious community and universities in support of parental involvement.